

Message Text

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SUBJ: ARMY DAY EDITORIAL AND RALLY SPEECH CALL FOR
MILITARY MODERNIZATION

REF: (A) PEKING 1582, (B) HONG KONG 8981

SUMMARY: A JOINT EDITORIAL BY THREE PEKING ORGANS ON THE
OCCASION OF THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FOUNDING OF THE
PEOPLE'S LIBERATION ARMY (PLA) CALLED FOR ACCELERATION OF
THE MODERNIZATION OF NATIONAL DEFENSE. THE EDITORIAL
NEATLY BALANCED A CALL FOR CONTINUED ADHERENCE TO CHAIRMAN
MAO'S THEORY OF "PEOPLE'S WAR" AND EMPHASIS ON THE NEED
TO DEVELOP THE ECONOMY AND NATIONAL DEFENSE. VICE CHAIRMAN
YEH CHIEN-YING'S SPEECH AT AN ARMY DAY RALLY (JULY 31)
CONCENTRATED ON PRAISE FOR MAO'S MILITARY THEORIES BUT
ALSO CALLED FOR MODERNIZATION. END SUMMARY.

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1. "ACCELERATE MODERNIZATION OF NATIONAL DEFENSE",
A JOINT EDITORIAL IN THE AUGUST 1 EDITIONS OF "PEOPLE'S
DAILY", "RED FLAG", AND "LIBERATION ARMY DAILY", GAVE
FULL PRAISE TO MAO'S CONCEPTS OF THE PEOPLE'S ARMY
AND PEOPLE'S WAR, BUT THE EDITORIALS'S MAIN THRUST IS
THE NEED FOR ACCELERATED MODERNIZATION OF NATIONAL

DEFENSE. THE EDITORIAL SAYS THAT THE OVERTHROW OF THE "GANG OF FOUR" WHO CRITICIZED PREPAREDNESS AGAINST WAS AS "NOT TAKING CLASS STRUGGLE AS THE KEY LINK", ELIMINATED THE MAIN OBSTACLE TO ARMY BUILDING. MODERNIZATION IS NEEDED, THE EDITORIAL CLAIMED, BECAUSE "THE FACTORS FOR WAR ARE INCREASING" AND THE SOVIETS, IN PARTICULAR, ARE "BENT ON SUBJUGATING CHINA".

2. THE EDITORIAL STRESSED THAT, "A STRONG NATIONAL DEFENSE MUST HAVE A STRONG ECONOMY AS ITS BASE". PROGRESS IN AGRICULTURE, INDUSTRY AND SCIENCE IS DESCRIBED AS A PREREQUISITE FOR MILITARY MODERNIZATION AND THE PLA SHOULD PLAY AN ACTIVE ROLE IN BUILDING THE ECONOMY. THUS, THE EDITORIAL REJECTS ARGUMENTS FOR A MILITARY BUILDUP WITHOUT FIRST STRENGTHENING THE NATIONAL ECONOMY. THIS UNEQUIVOCAL STAND IN SUCH AN OFFICIAL FORMAT SUGGESTS THAT THE INTERNAL DEBATE ON PRIORITIES HAS BEEN RESOLVED, AT LEAST FOR THIS YEAR'S PLANNING.

3. A SPEECH DELIVERED BY PARTY VICE-CHAIRMAN/ DEFENSE MINISTER YEH CHIEN-YING AT A JULY 31 RALLY TO CELEBRATE THE 50TH ARMY DAY (REFTELS) MADE MANY OF THE SAME POINTS AS THE EDITORIAL BUT DEVOTED MORE ATTENTION TO THE IMPORTANCE OF MAO'S DEVOTED OF PEOPLE'S WAR WHICH ENABLED THE ARMY, THROUGH LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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RELIANCE ON THE PEOPLE, TO MAKE UP FOR ITS LACK OF WEAPONS AND EQUIPMENT. YEH FOLLOWS THIS STATEMENT WITH AN ASSERTION THAT PEOPLE'S WAR IS "OUR MAGIC WEAPON PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE". NEVERTHELESS, YEH GOES ON TO SAY THAT WHILE CARRYING FORWARD "REVOLUTIONIZATION" OF THE ARMY (FOLLOWING MAO'S MILITARY LINE), MODERNIZATION OF THE ARMY REQUIRES "POWERFUL GROUND, AIR AND NAVY FORCES AND MODERN ARMS AND EQUIPMENT, INCLUDING GUIDED MISSILES AND NUCLEAR WEAPONS" AS WELL AS TRAINING TO MASTER THE NEW WEAPONS "AND THE CONSEQUENT NEW TACTICS".
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